



Understanding COVID Exposure in Fitness Facilities

Wearing a mask can help prevent the spread of COVID-19

During these unique and unprecedented times, we know that no public facility, whether it be a grocery store, a doctor's office or a health and fitness club, can completely prevent the spread of COVID-19, but we have made significant progress in the last year studying the virus and learning methods through which to protect ourselves and our communities.

The number one way to protect yourself from COVID-19 is by wearing a mask, a health and safety precaution that OHFA fully endorses and mandates that its members enforce in their facilities.

On February 24, the [CDC published two reports](#) outlining case studies of COVID-19 outbreaks at fitness centers. These cases found that wearing a mask at a gym, a requirement in all of Oregon's health and fitness facilities, [can prevent COVID outbreaks](#).

For example, last summer [in Hawaii](#), a fitness instructor wore a mask while leading a class less than three days before his symptoms for COVID-19 arrived, and none of the 27 attendees reported positive tests within the following two weeks. However, when the same instructor led another class the following day without a mask at a different venue, each of the 10 participants later tested positive for COVID-19.

Masks are very effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

In Oregon, we go beyond the CDC requirements for implementing health and safety precautions in fitness centers, including:

- Mandating mask usage at all times
- Ensuring social distancing – up to 25 feet in “extreme risk” counties
- Decreasing occupancy to well below 5% in some cases, due to arbitrary maximum occupancy requirements that do not take into account a facility’s size
- Requiring enhanced sanitization procedures
- Recommending enhanced ventilation and HVAC systems to ensure air flow

With the right precautions, including mandated mask usage, exercising at a health and fitness club exposes you to less risk of contracting COVID-19 than a trip to the grocery store or the doctor's office, which have less strict social distancing and sanitization mandates.

Oregon's health and fitness clubs are safe.